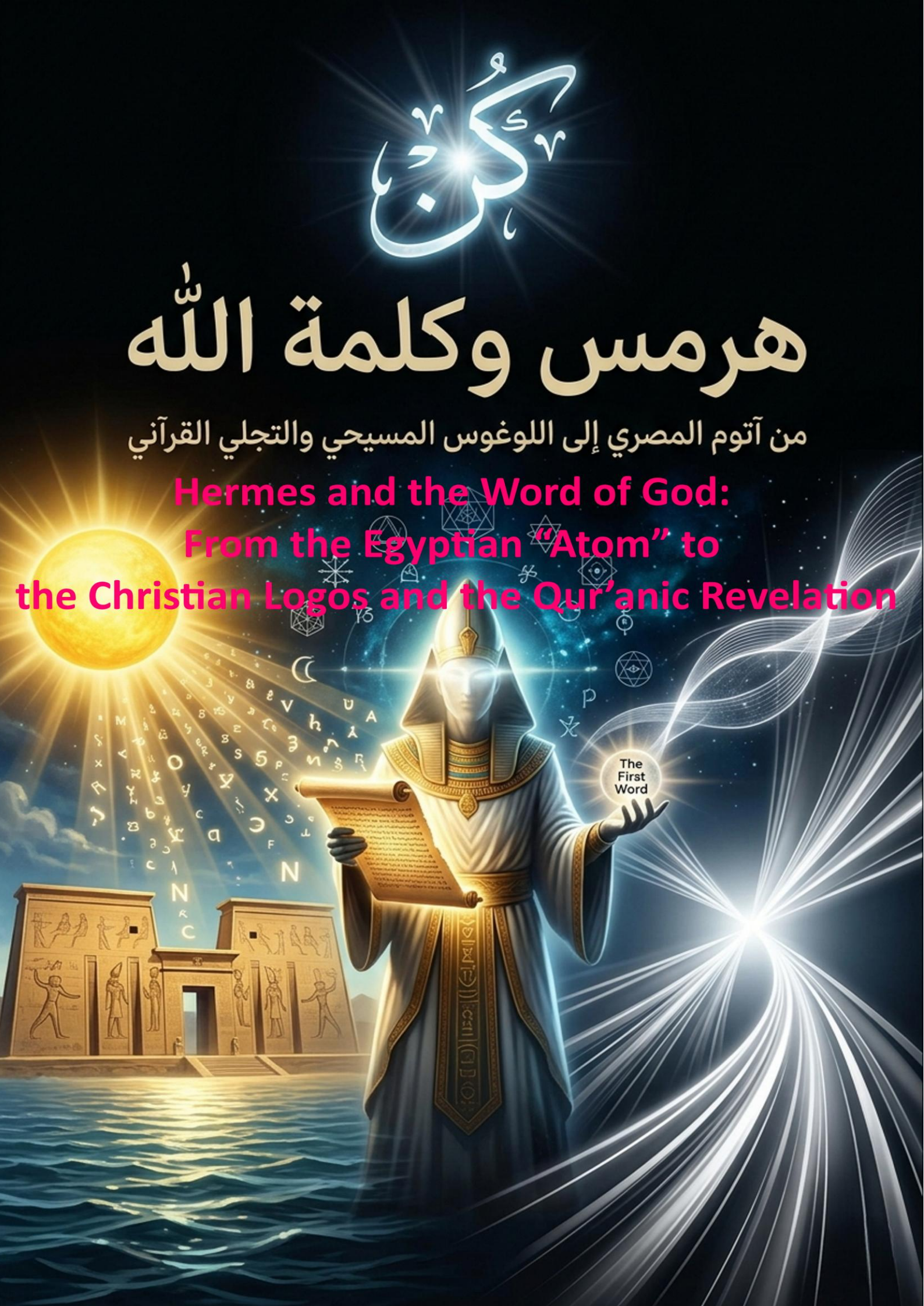
كُن
هرمس وكلمة الله
من آتوم المصري إلى اللوغوس المسيحي والتجلي القرآني
Hermes and the Word of God:
From the Egyptian “Atom” to
the Christian Logos and the Qur’anic Revelation
The First Word

Hermes and the Word of God: From the Egyptian “Atom” to the Christian Logos and the Qur’anic Revelation

When ancient humans first stood before the sky, they did not see it as a void hanging above their heads, but as a colossal question that engulfed their entire existence. The stars were beyond reach, yet their influence was so close to the soul that it made them feel that behind this wondrous order lay a hidden mind, and that behind the apparent movement lay a secret imperceptible to the senses. From this point began the great journey of religions, philosophies, and myths: the quest for the First Name, the First Word, the Mind that gave birth to the universe..
At the heart of this journey stands Hermes Trismegistus, one of the most enigmatic and influential figures in the spiritual history of humankind. He is not merely an ancient Egyptian sage, nor simply a mythical figure around whom tales have accumulated; rather, he seems to be the ancient memory of the very idea of mystical monotheism. This monotheism does not merely believe in one God, but attempts to penetrate the nature of this God, His relationship to the world, and the limits of language in describing Him..
In the Hermetic texts, God does not appear as a being sitting above the heavens and ruling the universe from the outside, but rather as the universal mind from which all existence emanates. This is why Hermes used the name "Atum" for God. However, "Atum" here is not simply the well-known Egyptian god of ancient mythology, but a symbol of the transcendent Absolute, which cannot be encompassed by name or image..
Hermes says:
“He has no name, for all names are named after him.”
“He is the One, there is nothing like Him.”
“He is the hidden one who is manifest in everything.”
These statements are not merely poetic reflections, but a profoundly significant philosophical declaration. For God here is not an object that the mind can grasp as it grasps objects, but rather the very origin that makes perception possible. He is the presence that fills everything without becoming anything itself. This is why Hermes says that grasping Atum is arduous, because the finite cannot contain the infinite, and time cannot encompass the eternal..
Surprisingly, this Hermetic transcendence comes remarkably close to the formulations that would later appear in Islam.:

- “There is nothing like Him.”
- “God is the Eternal.”
- “He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden.”

In both cases, we are faced with an attempt to liberate the concept of God from embodiment and limitation. God is not a body, nor an image, nor a limited force among other forces, but rather the very origin of existence. Hermes goes even further when he says:

“He has no body, but He is in everything.”
Here we enter the most dangerous area in religious philosophy: How can God be transcendent to the world, yet present in it at the same time? How can He be both transcendent and manifest?
This same question would later become the heart of Islamic mysticism, the heart of Neoplatonism, and the heart of Christian Gnosticism. Plotinus would attempt to answer it with the concept of "emanation," while Ibn Arabi would answer it with the concept of "manifestations," where the world is neither separate from the Truth nor entirely identical to it, but rather a manifestation of its names and attributes..
But the most striking aspect of Hermeticism is not just its conception of God, but its conception of the “Word.”“
In the Hermetic vision, creation begins with light, and then the "Word" appears as the force that organizes the chaos. Hermes says:
“My word that brought calm amidst the turmoil is ‘Son of God.’”
“The first thought is the father of the word.”
“Life is the union of mind and word.”
Here we have the first seed of what would later be known in Greek philosophy as “the Logos”.Logos. For Hermes, the Word is not a spoken word, but a universal principle. It is the hidden geometry that makes the world capable of order, the law by which beings are organized, and the mind that gives meaning to chaos.
It is not a linguistic “word,” but an “existential word.”“
That is why he described it as:
“The idea of a beautiful system in which everything is consistent.”
Here we can understand why early Christianity, especially in Alexandria, was influenced by this Hermetic conception. In the Gospel of John, we find the famous phrase:
“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
It is almost the same formulation, but with a fundamental shift. In Christianity, the “Word” becomes a divine person incarnate in the person of Jesus, son of Mary.That is, the cosmic logos is transformed into a human presence within history.
Islam, however, took a completely different path. It rejected the idea of divine sonship and incarnation, but retained the profound metaphysical structure of the concept of "the Word." This is why the Quran describes Jesus as:

- “The Word of God.”
- “And a spirit from Him.”

This expression is among the most profound in the entire Quran. The Quran does not make Jesus a part of the divine essence, but rather returns him to his luminous origin as a direct manifestation of the divine command. In the Quranic view, Jesus is not “the son of God,” but “a word” from among His words, that is, a manifestation of the divine creative power..

Herein lies the subtle difference between Islam and Christianity.:

- Christianity made the Word an incarnate divine being..
- While Islam retained the word as an act of God.

However, the profound similarity between the two conceptions reveals that the idea of the "Word" was not a recent phenomenon, but rather had been circulating for centuries in the spiritual space of the ancient East, from Egypt to Alexandria to Palestine to the Arabian Peninsula..

Perhaps most importantly, Hermes does not speak of “faith” as a ritual, but as knowledge. For him, salvation is not achieved through sacrifices, but through inner awakening. This is why he says that humankind was created to know the Supreme Intellect. Knowledge here is not theoretical science, but a spiritual experience, a kind of union with the original light..

This is the essence of GnosticismGnosis, or “innate knowledge,” would later influence broad currents of Islamic and Christian mysticism.

Therefore, when we read the Hermes Invocations, we feel that we are not reading a pagan text in the traditional sense, but a mystical text centuries ahead of its time. He does not worship an idol, but addresses the Absolute.:

“Atom is the first thought; he is greater than to be called Atom.”

This statement alone is enough to realize that we are dealing with a religious consciousness that has transcended the stage of the "tribal deity" to the idea of the absolute, which language cannot contain. Here, the name is merely a sign, and the symbol is not the truth itself..

This is what the Sufis would later say in different ways.:

- “Whatever comes to your mind, God is other than that.”
- “The inability to perceive is perception.”

Hermes understands that language fails before the absolute, and therefore he resorts to symbol, light, the word, and contemplation. He tries to approach the truth without claiming to possess it..

This explains why Hermeticism survived despite the fall of civilizations. Temples disappeared, libraries burned, and texts were lost, but the idea itself continued its journey.:

- It appeared in Gnosticism,
- Then in Neoplatonism,
- Then in alchemy,
- Then in Islamic mysticism,
- Then in the philosophies of illumination,
- Then even in some modern physics reflections on the mind and cosmic order.

Indeed, the phrase Hermes:

“Everything is the thought of Atom.”

Today, it almost aligns with some philosophical and scientific conceptions that see the universe as closer to an informational or mental structure than to inanimate matter..

But what truly makes the Hermetic text so moving is not only its philosophical depth, but also its poignant, human tone. Hermes feels that humanity will one day lose this spiritual meaning, that science will become divorced from wisdom, and that humankind will know how to explain things without knowing why it exists in the first place..
That is why he speaks in a prophetic tone.:
“People will become weary of life, and cease to see the universe as something worthy of sacred wonder.”
It is as if Hermes could see modern man thousands of years ago:

- A person who possesses technology,
- But he lost his sense of wonder.
- He knows the laws of matter.
- But he does not know the meaning of existence..

Here, Hermeticism transforms from a mere ancient tradition into a highly contemporary question.:
Can a person live without spiritual meaning?
Is a scientific explanation of the universe sufficient for us to understand it existentially?
Is the mind alone capable of perceiving the truth, or does the truth begin when the mind acknowledges its limitations?
Ultimately, it seems that Hermes was not merely attempting to describe God, but rather trying to awaken humanity from the illusion of separation. For him, the universe is not a collection of inanimate objects, but a living entity connected to a universal mind, and humanity is not a transient body, but a spark of consciousness searching for its primordial origin..
This is why "the word" remained the center of everything..
The word with which creation began.
The word that organized the chaos.
The Word that Christians saw embodied in Christ.
The word that Islam restored to the status of divine command:
“Be, and it is.”
Thus, the hidden threads extend from the temples of ancient Egypt to Alexandria, from Alexandria to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Mecca.
It's as if all of humanity has been revolving around the same question since the beginning.:
How does the absolute manifest itself in the world?
How can a finite human being touch the infinite, even for a single moment of light?